



Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien Convenes Stakeholders throughout Colorado to Connect More Kids to the Outdoors

The Issue: There is a growing urgency to reconnect kids to the outdoors again, both nationally and in Colorado. The benefits of spending time outdoors are well-known including improved physical and mental health and well-being and development of a conservation ethic. Studies indicate access to the outdoors and nature improves concentration and impulse control, helps with emotional coping and stress reduction, develops creativity, reduces symptoms of ADD and ADHD, increases motor coordination and develops a conservation ethic. Children who spend time outdoors will also be more likely to become stewards of Colorado's public lands and participate in outdoor recreation later in life. Outdoor recreation is an integral component of Colorado's heritage and economy, generating an estimated \$10 - \$15 billion annually in economic activity.

While many entities are working diligently across Colorado to connect youth to the outdoors, these efforts could be even more effective if we worked collaboratively.

The Plan: The Lt. Governor will be traveling around the state throughout the summer to convene community forums in various regions of Colorado. Building on the success of past events and planning processes related to kids and the outdoors, the Lt. Governor's forums will focus on moving forward into action. Participants, representing all sectors vested in this issue, will help form recommendations to move this initiative forward to result in measurable, permanent change. Replicable programs, barriers, potential resources, current initiatives, and local, regional, and statewide collaborations will also be discussed.

Goals and Objectives:

- **Raise awareness** about the importance of reconnecting kids with the outdoors
- **Promote discussion** in regions around the State of Colorado about resolving the issue
- **Implement a Children's Bill of Outdoors Rights for Colorado's youth**
- **Compile a database** of current replicable initiatives and collaborations
- **Develop and distribute a toolkit** for communities and organizations
- **Foster a collaborative network** of stakeholders
- **Determine** suggestions and recommendations to be addressed at local, regional, state, and national levels including policy recommendations
- **Publish a report** of successes, challenges, and action items
- **Convene a final forum in September 2009** to share results and determine strategies to implement recommendations
- **Make the State of Colorado a leader in this movement!**



Who is Invited?

All private, public, non-profit entities and community groups interested in getting more kids in the outdoors are invited. Forums are open to anyone who can contribute to resolving this dilemma. The following list is not exhaustive but demonstrates the variety of individuals and groups who should attend:

- YOU!
- Community leaders
- Early Childhood Councils
- Educators and education professionals from early childhood, K-12, higher education, and environmental education
- Healthcare providers
- Outdoor industry representatives
- Local public health officials
- Local public land managers
- Local parks and recreation agencies
- Non-profit organizations including program providers, volunteerism and service groups, industry associations, etc.
- Outdoor recreation providers and partners
- User groups including: motorized, non-motorized, and sportsmen groups
- State legislators
- Transportation and planning representatives
- Community organizers and parents
- LiveWell communities
- Juvenile detention, probation workers, and social workers
- Foster care community
- Mental health professionals
- Philanthropic groups and funders
- And many others!

Please help publicize this opportunity by distributing this information to your networks.

And Then . . .

Lt. Governor O'Brien would like to support a Colorado movement in which the recommendations from this tour can be carried forward, the communities around the state can share ideas with each other while giving continuous feedback to statewide initiatives based on their needs, and, ultimately, create a statewide, sustainable coalition. This will require determining funding sources, continuing to build relationships, following up with communities, initiating policy changes at a variety of levels, and working together. The outcomes of this tour are expected to become a part of this overall effort as we all move forward toward the ultimate goal of reconnecting kids with the outdoors in a healthy, meaningful, and safe manner.

Where & When (tentative):

Date	Location
5/1/2009	Grand Junction
5/28/2009	Southwest - Durango
6/4/2009	Front Range - Boulder
6/11/2009	North Central – Ft. Collins
6/23/2009	Northwest
7/10/2009	El Paso County
7/14/2009	South Central
7/30/2009	Southeast
8/11/2009	Northeast
9/10/2009	Summit County
9/23/2009	Golden

Times and locations TBD.

Have questions, recommendations, interest in participating or hosting, or want to RSVP?

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